

MEETING SUMMARY

MEETING: South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team

DATE: March 28, 2002

TIME: 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Vee Quiva Casino

ATTENDANCE:

Carlie Billen Back, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Lee Banning, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA
Chuck Crist, Lakewood HOA
Chuck Cunningham, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Sharolyn Hohman, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
Robert Moss, United Arizona Dairyman

Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Rd/I-10 Landowner Association
Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
Barbara Schneider, South Mountain Village
James Slaker, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
Jim Stroger, Kyrene Lagos Elementary School
Mary Thomas, GRIC Elderly Concerns Group
Dave Williams, Knight Transportation

STAFF:

Thor Anderson, ADOT
Debra Duerr, HDR
John Roberts, GRIC DOT
John Godec, GRA
Theresa Gunn, GCI

MEETING SUMMARY: Jennifer Graziano, GCI

DECISION:

The group agreed to continue with the existing policy of not allowing the public to attend the meetings. They also agreed to host public meetings in the future if necessary.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 25, 2002

ACTION PLAN:

Task/Activity	Who	By When
Provide members a copy of the design of the original alignment	GCI	April 25

HANDOUTS:

- Vision 21 Newsletter
- Regional Freeway System Map

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Godec, GRA, opened the meeting by welcoming the members and asking if they had any new issues or concerns to report.

CAP Member Questions and Comments:

- **Question:** Collection of data. How do I get accurate information? Laveen citizens were told that the freeway would be depressed. Now developers are saying that the freeway could not be below grade due to the high water table. What is it going to be? **Answer:** Original plan was at an at-grade with no frills for all freeways. We will try to find a copy of the original alignment design.
- **Comment:** If it's not going to be below grade, Laveen doesn't want the original alignment.
- **Comment:** Concern about the joint village planning committee meeting. Two of the three people that participated are major landowners and would benefit financially from the alignment. **Response:** E-mail regarding representation from Laveen will be put into the record.

PROJECT STATUS

Debra Duer, HDR Engineering, gave an update on the planning/technical status of the project.

- We are running a couple of months behind schedule, but should be able to catch up.
- Still finalizing purpose and need document. The report will be given to CAT members for comment.
- The project team is working on the MAG truck model.
- The alternative screening process consists of developing alternatives and at the April CAT meeting, the members will have an opportunity to screen the alternatives.

Public Involvement Update

Theresa Gunn, GCI, gave an update on the public involvement program. Theresa reviewed the website for CAT members, past meetings and upcoming meetings.

Open Meeting Status Update

John Godec, GRA, gave an update on the open meeting status.

- ADOT and the Attorney General has said that these are not open meetings. However, as we move forward we may have additional people that want to attend.

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Mary Thomas, former GRIC Governor, gave a presentation on Gila River Indian Community Governance.

- GRIC consists of 372,000 acres including 300-400 acres at Williams Gateway.
- The 17 member Tribal Council meets twice monthly and consists of elected councilmen representing seven districts.

- GRIC is building a lot of infrastructure including a lagoon system for wastewater treatment.
- GRIC is an island that is being surrounded by the urban area.
- 8,000 new homes are being built in Maricopa City.
- Tribal Council is trying to determine how to handle the growth.
- South Mountain is very spiritual to the tribe. 70,000 Pimas all disappeared, but lot of archeological sites remain.
- A lot has been forced on the tribe. They want to watch process and then say yes or no to the proposals.
- Sovereignty only covers how to set up laws, ordinances, codes and keeping free of suit. Land is trust land. GRIC has a 20 page constitution based on the US Constution.
- GRIC has its own police department with 60 officers.
- GRIC has the same social problems – gangs, drugs, etc.
- Indian Gaming is very important. Revenue is used like a tax for infrastructure, roads and health programs.
- There is concern about traffic fatalities due to truck traffic on 51st Avenue.
- When new route opens it will be congested.
- GRIC is concerned but the community is divided.
- Committees: Natural Resources, Government/Management, Economic Development and Executive Committee.
- Addressing housing and diabetic epidemic. 52% of residents over 35 years of age is diabetic. We are building dialysis centers.
- Governed by a majority vote of tribal council.
- Updating GRIC general plan for the northern border areas.
- Worried about air pollution and jurisdictional issues.
- There are 21 tribes in Arizona. GRIC is the 3rd largest in Arizona. 16,000 members. Any resident over 18 can vote. The elections are non-partisan.
- GRIC pays taxes but not property taxes.
- GRIC wants to be good neighbors but worry about wide scale invasion of their lands.
- GRIC is the 4th largest farm in the State of Arizona producing alfalfa, wheat, citrus and fish.
- Pima is a Spanish word that means “I don’t understand”. Maricopas came from Colorado and started living with the Pimas.
- Land is often owned by numerous people so it is hard to purchase right-of-way.
- History is oral and not written.
- Native Americans gained right to vote in 1948.

CAP Member Questions and Comments:

- **Question:** Who would make the alignment decision from GRIC? **Answer:** GRIC would probably have a vote of all tribal residents There are approximately 16,000 enrolled members, 11-12,000 live on community and the others live all over the world.

- **Question:** Are there larger pieces of other issues that would affect discussions regarding alignment? **Answer:** Tribal community doesn't use the bargaining chip.
- **Question:** Any plans to expand Vee Quiva Casino? **Answer:** Expansion is up to the State. We are limited to the number of machines and square feet of building. GRIC hasn't planned any expansion because not sure where the freeway is going to go.
- **Question:** Why doesn't the tribe tell us where you want the freeway? What is your preferred alignment? **Answer:** Have been waiting for someone to ask that question.
- **Comment:** Only place to move the alignment is on the reservation.
- **Comment:** GRIC has been asked to present alternatives and the study team is waiting to hear back from the tribe.
- **Comment:** GRIC has interest in a toll road. The tribe should get a residual per car.

DEVELOPMENT AND DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES

Theresa Gunn, GCI, reviewed the environmental baseline map and then the CAT members broke up into groups to discuss alternatives.

Group 1

- Sensitive areas are South Mountain Park and natural gas lines.
- Use Pecos to 40th Street and connect into the toll road alignment one and one half miles southwest of 51st Avenue north to boundary and parallel to 75th Avenue north to I-10.
- Turn 51st Avenue into no truck traffic.
- East of 75th Avenue there is a large Target distribution center.
- Lots of houses on Buckeye and Broadway Roads.
- Concern about alignment in District 6. It is kind of a brick wall. They don't like truck traffic and may be able to negotiate the freeway alignment to reduce truck traffic.
- Near 51st and 59th Avenues – power line and gas line corridors.
- The west end of South Mountain is not in the preserve but is sensitive to the tribe.

Group 2

- Avoid multi-owner lots south of Pecos, St. Johns. Use pipeline alignment.
- GRIC south of agricultural land north of Firebird Lake.
- 6 lane tie into Queen Creek.
- Split alignment – 4 lane east going to downtown along existing alignment and a 4 lane alignment (better for trucks) that goes to 107th Avenue.
- 63rd Avenue alignment cuts a Laveen neighborhood in half.
- Anything east of 75th Avenue SRP is concerned about water pipes and the high maintenance cost of having pipe under a freeway.

Group 3

- Use existing I-10 interchange.
- Keep smaller freeway on existing alignment and a 2nd leg at 107th Avenue.

Group 4

- Go through allotted land. Stay along GRIC boundary. Go to 63rd Avenue.
- Bridge has to match flood plan. Cross at narrowest point.
- Go north on 83rd Avenue (lot of hazardous waste and 79th Avenue HOV ramps) or 75th Avenue but wider river crossing.
- Distribution of SRP lines.
- Boundary may go through sensitive lands.
- Closer to park boundary not split District 6.
- How close to park boundary (tip of south mountain) may be off limits.
- Avondale/Tolleson and GRIC has a government to speak on their behalf but Laveen is left hanging without a strong voice.
- Use the Tempe example of freeway along riverbed and use infrastructure to create a water feature.
- South alignment 63rd Avenue not south enough, maybe 80th Avenue best.